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Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00
EB-08 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 /053 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:MTDIXON:DKM
APPROVED BY EUR/SOV: WHEDGAR
EB/OA:RABROWN
----------120408Z 006179 /63
P 120242Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055623

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, UR, US

SUBJECT: US-SOVIET CIVIL AVIATION RELATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 2996

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES FULL REPORT ON MARCH 3 SAMORUKOV-DRAHORAD MEETING. WE AGREE, PER STATE 49208, THAT US TICKETING RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED UNTIL SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF 1966 BILATERAL AGREEMENT CEASE. IN FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS WE HAVE TRIED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS POSED REFTEL.

2. STATUS OF REVENUE POOLING PROPOSAL. SUPPORT FOR POOLING OUTSIDE DEPARTMENT HAS GREATLY ERODED. WE ARE NOT ABLE TO GUARANTEE CAB APPROVAL EVEN WITH HIGH-LEVEL JUSTIFICATION ON FOREIGN POLICY GROUNDS. IF POOLING IS ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO RESOLVE THE IMBALANCE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, WE ARE PREPARED TO DEFEND IT. IN ANY CASE, THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
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DETAILED IN OUR 1976 PROPOSAL.

3. FEBRUARY 1977 TALKS. WE BELIEVE STATE 43254 IS FAIRLY COMPLETE SUMMARY OF LAST ROUND OF TALKS. AMONG THE MOST UNFORTUNATE FEATURES OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS WERE THE LACK

OF SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS AND THE ALMOST LIMITLESS THEATRICS

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OF THE SOVIET SIDE (E.G. CONSTANTLY PULLING "PROPOSALS"
OUT OF THE HAT).

4. IN 1976 PAN AM OPERATED 96 CHARTERS; ONE FLIGHT WAS
OPERATED BY A US SUPPLEMENTAL CARRIER. AEROFLOT
OPERATED AT LEAST 54 CHARTERS DURING 1976. WE HAVE NO
1977 FIGURES; AEROFLOT IS APPARENTLY DELINQUENT IN
REPORTING CHARTERS TO THE CAB.

5. US VIEWS ON FEB. 22 SOVIET PROPOSAL (TRANSLATION
BEING POUCHED). POINT 1 OF SOVIET PROPOSAL WOULD GIVE
AEROFLOT MORE FREQUENCIES THAN PAN AM, EVEN WITH B-747
SUBSTITUTION FOR 707/727 ON TWO-TO-ONE BASIS. WE CANNOT
ACCEPT POINT 2 BECAUSE IT DOES NOT ADDRESS THE IMBALANCE
IN SOVIET-ORIGIN TRAFFIC. IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY
IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHAT CONSTITUTE US-ORGIN TRAFFIC
AND TO KEEP THE SOVIETS FROM CHEATING UNDER THIS
PROPOSAL. WE FAVOR AN APPROACH WHICH RELATES TO THE
TOTAL US-USSR MARKET. IN ADDITION, SOVIET PROPOSAL HAS
BIAS BECAUSE IT ATTEMPTS TO PENALIZE PAN AM FOR CARRYING
SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF TRAFFIC TO COPENHAGEN (THE SOVIETS
WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE THESE PASSENGERS IN TRAFFIC COUNT).
ACCORDING TO THE SOVIET ARGUEMENT, PAN AM ONLY TRIES TO
CARRY PASSENGERS AS FAR AS COPENHAGEN. CLEARLY PAN AM
WOULD BE HAPPY TO CARRY MORE PEOPLE TO MOSCOW IF THEY
WANTED TO GO THERE. POINT 3 IS OBJECTIONABLE BECAUSE
IF MAXIMUM AUTHORIZED FREQUENCIES BEGINNING APRIL 1977
THROUGH MAY 14, 1978 ARE NOT OPERATED,THE ENTIRE BALANCING
MECHANISM IS SCRAPPED. SPECIAL RATE IN POINT 4 IS NOT
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PRACTICAL BECAUSE THERE IS NO REASON THIRD COUNTRIES
WOULD NOT OFFER THE SAME RATES. IN ADDITION, SINCE
SPECIAL FARE ONLY APPLIES TO DIRECT FLIGHTS, THIS
APPROACH WOULD BE STEP BACKWARD TO ORIGINAL 1966
PROVISIONS. RE POINT 5, BEFORE REMOVING US RESTRICTIONS,
WE WOULD WANT ASSURANCES THAT USSR WOULD CEASE VIOLATIONS
OF 1966 BILATERAL. WE OBJECT TO ANY LIMITATION ON CHARTERS
THAT PROPOSED NOTES WOULD CONTAIN IN POINT 6. WE FIND
PROMISES OF PREFERENTIAL GROUND ACCOMODATIONS IN POINT 7
TOO VAGUE TO BE USEFUL, AND NOTE THAT THERE IS A BIAS
IN FAVOR OF SCHEDULED FLIGHTS.

6. DEPARTMENT SUGGESTS EMBASSY NOT REPEAT NOT SEEK
OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY POINTS MADE IN PARA 5 TO SAMORUKOV
AT THIS TIME. IF SOVIETS SHOULD RAISE MATTER, HOWEVER,
WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO USING THESE POINTS IN DEFENSE.

VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, CIVIL AVIATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETINGS, AIR FARES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE055623
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MTDIXON:DKM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770085-0417
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770365/aaaacfdh.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1c9224b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MOSCOW 2996
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3125861
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-SOVIET CIVIL AVIATION RELATIONS
TAGS: EAIR, UR, US
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1c9224b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009